

to medical research and will help our veterans that return home with both the physical and mental wounds of war.

The number of veterans using VA services is dramatically increasing as the population ages. The VA provides more care for veterans now than ever before, and more of these veterans and their families have increasingly critical needs.

I would also like to take a moment to address an amendment I offered that was included as part of a managers package.

My amendment directs the Secretary of the VA to spend at least \$21 million to fill critical staffing shortages in VA leadership at networks, medical centers, and health care systems across the country.

At least three dozen key VA leadership positions are currently filled by acting or interim directors, sometimes for years at a time. In my home State of Illinois, for example, Hines VA Hospital has not had a permanent director since 2014.

Permanently assigned leadership that is capable of overseeing and managing networks and medical centers is critical to delivering high quality care to our Nation's veterans in a timely fashion, especially at a time when the VA faces a number of challenges.

This funding will help the VA prioritize filling these key positions, as well as address staffing shortages in other management and clinical positions, including in rural and underserved areas.

It is my hope that this funding will allow the VA to quickly fill these important positions within the Department.

I am glad to say that overall, moving this bill is good for our Nation's military and their families.

I hope today's action by the Senate is another step in the direction of passing all 12 appropriations bills, all without ideological riders.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to continue to work with us in a bipartisan manner to pass additional appropriations bills without ideological riders.

I would also like to urge my colleagues to quickly send these funding measures to the President. Zika funding is needed now.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to join Americans across the country in recognizing the immeasurable sacrifices made every day by the men and women of law enforcement. Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers put their lives on the line to help uphold the rule of law in America. Their professionalism and commitment to justice underpin so much of what has allowed this country to thrive for generations.

In May 1962, President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week con-

taining May 15 as National Police Week. In that proclamation, President Kennedy stated, "... from the beginning of this Nation, law enforcement officers have played an important role in safeguarding the rights and freedoms which are guaranteed by the Constitution and in protecting the lives and property of our citizens. . . ."

It is that twofold role of protecting both the constitutional and physical well-being of all Americans that earns law enforcement officers such a revered place in American society. In the 53 years since President Kennedy established this national celebration of law enforcement, much has changed in regards to the tactics and procedure for protecting essential rights and freedoms, as well as the nature of threats against personal property and the citizenry. What has not changed in the unwavering commitment to addressing these challenges by law enforcement agencies nationwide.

My home State of Maryland is home to a close-knit, well-trained, and dedicated network of law enforcement agencies. Maryland is often called America in Miniature, and as such, Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers across Maryland are expected to be able to respond to an incredibly diverse set of situations.

Being on the front lines of upholding the rule of law and protecting Americans from harm is not easy work. There is hardly a law enforcement officer in the United States who will not face the threat of bodily harm during their career. Unfortunately, due to the dangerous nature of police work, law enforcement officers across the country are killed on the job every year.

Thus far in 2016, 35 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty. Every one of those men and women left a family and grieving law enforcement agency. California, Colorado, and Maryland share the painful distinction of leading the Nation in law enforcement deaths in the line of duty. Three officers from each one of the aforementioned States were killed in the line of duty; in Maryland, all three were killed by gunfire.

Senior Deputies Patrick Dailey and Mark Logsdon of the Harford County Sheriff's office and Officer Jacai Colson of the Prince George's County Police Department were all model officers who were tragically killed while protecting colleagues and civilians. All three of these men served communities in Maryland with distinction and contributed greatly to not only public safety but also to helping build strong and lasting relationships among law enforcement and the people they protect.

Senior Deputies Dailey and Logsdon were both fathers and military veterans. Both served honorably with the Harford County Sheriff's Office.

On Christmas Eve 2002, Deputy Dailey saved the life of a teenager traveling in an SUV that collided head-on with a cement mixing truck. Deputy

Dailey, a number of fellow sheriffs, and two civilians emptied six fire extinguishers in an attempt to quell a fire that threatened to engulf the vehicle and the unresponsive driver. Using only their bare hands and batons, the group managed to free the driver seconds before the fire consumed the passenger compartment. The teen was able to thank his rescuers 3 months later at the Harford County Sheriff's Office Awards Banquet.

Exactly 11 years before his death, Deputy Logsdon confronted a suicidal man who was armed with a loaded shotgun. In a display of great bravery and at great risk to himself, Deputy Logsdon managed to talk the man into surrendering his weapon. After the man was disarmed, Deputy Logsdon continued to help the man by transporting him to the hospital, where he received medical care.

Officer Colson was an undercover narcotics agent. He had a dangerous job with zero margin for error. Officer Colson did not make errors. He was a 4-year veteran of the Prince George's Police Department. The commander of the Prince George's County Police Department's Narcotic Enforcement Division said of Colson, "Not only is he good at his job, he's that guy that you wanted on your team."

The President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 89 described Officer Colson as "... always the first person here in the morning, ready to work and put in a full day's work."

All three of these men could have done anything with their lives, and they chose to uphold the law. I am thankful that, for the many people they interacted with on a daily basis, these men embodied justice. I join Marylanders in mourning their loss.

It is my hope that this National Police Week serves as a catalyst to communities and governments across the country to evaluate ways to better serve those who are sworn to protect and serve.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Madam President, this evening, I want to honor our Nation's peace officers and to remember those who we have lost in the line of duty over the last year.

Sunday was Peace Officers Memorial Day, a day set aside by President Kennedy in 1962 to honor those law enforcement officers who we have lost in the line of duty, a day that unfortunately has touched me personally, both in the past while serving as attorney general for North Dakota and tragically again earlier this year when the city of Fargo, ND, lost one of its finest in the line of duty.

On the evening of Wednesday, February 10, 2016, Fargo Police Officer Jason Moszer answered the call to serve and protect for what would turn out to be the last time. He knew when he answered that call that he would confront an active-shooter situation, and he never hesitated in taking up a position to put himself between the shooter and the community he so very much loved.

Officer Moszer was struck down that evening, and his name will forever be etched in stone on the North Dakota's Peace Officer's Memorial that sits on the grounds of the State capitol in Bismarck. Through rain, sleet, and snow—extreme heat and cold—he will now stand alongside those other North Dakota officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice. They provide an unwavering example that, regardless of what conditions they face, our peace officers will stand steadfast regardless of what challenges they may face.

National Police Week is very special to me. When I served as attorney general of North Dakota in the 1990s, I had the privilege to work directly with many of our State's law enforcement officers, from the highway patrol, to State and local officers, various Federal officers, and our tribal police. It was in that job that I truly began to appreciate the hard work and dedication of those officers who serve the people of North Dakota. These are some of the finest men and women I have ever met.

During my time as a U.S. Senator, I have been able to see many old friends that continue their service and have met an entire new generation of law enforcement officers at the beginning of their careers. I can tell you that this new generation of law enforcement officers are not only up to the task, but will most certainly meet the same standards of excellence as their predecessors.

I want to give special recognition to the Grand Forks Country Drug Task Force, a collection of State, local, and Federal law enforcement members who were honored earlier this year by the HIDTA program with an Outstanding Cooperative Effort award. This award came was the result of Operation Denial, a multiagency investigation into the international trafficking of fentanyl and other lethal drugs that led to multiple arrests and convictions in various States and countries. As we talk about the opioid abuse epidemic in the Senate and look to address this scourge on our communities, law enforcement officers are on the front lines tackling this challenge head-on.

When honoring the service and sacrifice of our Nation's law enforcement officers, all too often there is a group of officers that don't garner the attention and praise that they deserve, our tribal law enforcement officers. Tribal officers work in some of the most challenging conditions, with incredible jurisdictional challenges and an embarrassing lack of resources, but they do not let that stand in the way of their dedication and passion to protect Indian Country. This evening, I want to extend special recognition and a personal thank you to all of our tribal law enforcement officers.

I continue to work on behalf of our men and women in law enforcement, and all of us in Congress must continue to support our law enforcement officers with the resources and protections nec-

essary for them to perform their duties.

Last year, I was proud to see a bill that I cosponsored, the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu [Wen-Gin Lew] National Blue Alert Act, enacted into law. This bipartisan legislation established a national Blue Alert communications network to disseminate information about threats to officers. The law seeks to make sure that appropriate steps can be taken as quickly as possible to provide for an officer's safety.

Just yesterday, the President signed two more bills into law that I supported and that will give law enforcement additional and sorely needed resources, the Transnational Drug Trafficking Act that will provide increased tools to go after foreign manufacturers or distributors of chemicals that will eventually end up in the U.S. as illicit drugs, and the Bulletproof Vest Reauthorization Act will extend for 5 years the matching grant program that helps law enforcement purchase lifesaving bulletproof vests.

Just last week, another bill, the POLICE Act, passed out of the Judiciary Committee. This bill would make Federal grants available for law enforcement officers and medical personnel to help them better prepare for active-shooter situations, including training civilians on how to respond if confronted by an active shooter. Congress needs to swiftly pass this bill.

And I am a proud cosponsor of Senator LEAHY and Senator GRASSLEY's resolution recognizing among other things, the dedication and sacrifice of all of our law enforcement officers and our debt of gratitude to each and every one of them.

Thank you to all of our Nation's law enforcement officers for the jobs you do every day. I want to especially thank the law enforcement officers in my home State of North Dakota. I believe they are the finest collection of officers in the Nation. They are out there working day and night to keep our families safe, and just as they do for us, I will keep fighting for them every day. This Nation, our State, and our local communities owe our law enforcement officers a continuing debt of gratitude for their selfless actions to meet their sworn duty to protect and serve.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BOB NEWMAN

• Mr. DAINES. Madam President, in honor of National Military Appreciation Month, I wish to recognize Bob Newman of Musselshell County, a U.S. Army veteran. After leaving the Army, he went into law enforcement and served his community in the Musselshell County Sheriff's Department. Newman has dedicated his life to serving God, his country, and his community by giving countless hours of his time to military service, as well as

helping fellow veterans in a countless number of ways.

Since leaving the Army, Newman has participated in hundreds of services aimed towards veterans. Two great examples of his dedication are his work with the Patriot Guard of Montana and with Big Sky Honor Flights. The Patriot Guard of Montana was founded in 2005, and Newman was one of its original members; he now serves as a ride captain. This grassroots organization consists of motorcycle riders who want to show respect for fallen American soldiers by escorting funeral processions for fallen heroes and protecting mourning family and friends from any potential disturbances caused by protestors.

Newman also partakes in Big Sky Honor Flights, an organization whose mission is "to recognize Montana World War II Veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by flying them to Washington, D.C., to see their memorial at no cost." Upon one flight's return in 2013, he was a part of the celebrating crowd that welcomed the veterans back at the Billings Logan International Airport with loud cheering and waving of American flags. Newman said, "It's an honor to be able to stand for them and give them the recognition they deserve."

Other services Newman has been involved in are the Missing in America Project, assisting families of our fallen heroes in various capacities, helping disabled veterans and homeless veterans in addition to an endless amount of other projects for those in need.

Montana has a rich legacy of military service, and Bob is a true Montana hero and role model for us all. It takes a devoted and courageous person to sacrifice their life to protect the lives and freedom that we hold so dear. I am deeply grateful for the many sacrifices Bob has made for our Nation and State.●

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT KAT KAELIN

• Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize SSG Kat Kaelin for her outstanding contributions in serving our country. In 2011, Staff Sergeant Kaelin was selected to serve as a member of a 20-woman cultural support team, CST, that assisted Special Operations missions in locating terrorists for an 8 month period. It gives me great pleasure to recognize her achievement in qualifying for this prestigious position and for her continued dedication in serving the female military community.

Staff Sergeant Kaelin joined the Nevada National Guard while she was still in her junior year of high school at Spring Creek High School. Beginning in August of 2011, she served in an 8-month mission in Iraq as a member of CST-2. The team was designed specifically to serve as a resource for the 75th Ranger Regiment in its mission by gathering information from Afghan